THIRD WORLD CONFLICT AND AMERICAN RESPONSE IN THE POST-COLD WAR WORLD

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The author of this report looks at the ways in which the end of the cold war affects the pattern of violent conflict in the international system. Based on this examination, he suggests that the focus of national security attention in the new international order is likely to shift to the Third World. Instability and war have always been a prominent feature of that part of the world, but he argues the end of the cold war will help change both the nature of that pattern and how the United States may respond to Third World conflicts. He concludes with some suggestions about how the Army might be affected by this change and how it can maximize its utility in the new environment.

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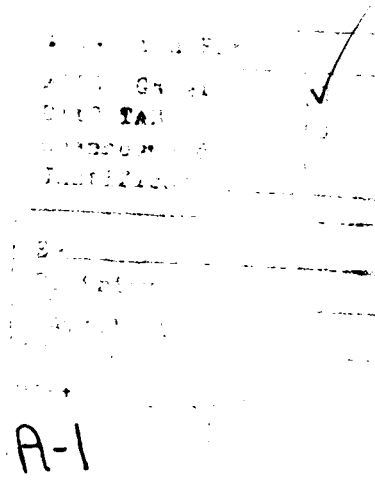

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CONTENTS

Foreword v

Summary vii

Chapter 1. Introduction 1

Chapter 2. Third World Conflict After the Cold War . . . 13

Chapter 3. The Pattern of Third World Conflict 27

Chapter 4. Implications for the Army 49

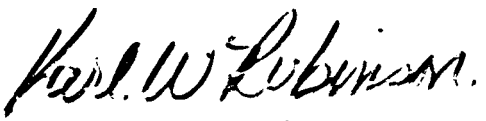
Endnotes 55

About the Author 61

FOREWORD

The author of this report looks at the ways in which the end of the cold war affects the pattern of violent conflict in the international system. Based on this examination, he suggests that the focus of national security attention in the new international order is likely to shift to the Third World. Instability and war have always been a prominent feature of that part of the world, but he argues the end of the cold war will help change both the nature of that pattern and how the United States may respond to Third World conflicts. He concludes with some suggestions about how the Army might be affected by this change and how it can maximize its utility in the new environment.

This report should be a useful guide not only to specialists on Third World conflict, but also for any officer interested in the operational art as it applies to both internal and external conflicts in the Third World.



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SUMMARY

This study examines the end of the cold war military confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective alliances and the consequences of that change on the international system and on the pattern of violence in the Third World. The purpose is to try to determine how an altered environment affects the likely uses of American military power in the post-cold war world. The study concludes that the major focus of violent conflict in the newly emerging order will continue to be in the Third World. The absence of major conflict in the First World means that the United States can turn its attention toward the maintenance of peace in the Third World in the future. This does not mean that the United States will become the "world's policeman," but it does mean that we can both protect our national interests when they are threatened by instability in the Third World and, through international organizations when possible, attempt to deter and resolve regional conflicts.

The study begins by looking at the causes and consequences of the end of the cold war. First, it examines those factors that led the Soviet Union to conclude the cold war competition by allowing the overthrow of Communist governments in Eastern Europe. The underlying causes identified are the increasing hollowness of a military competition deadlocked by the fear that any war could escalate to nuclear war, and the growing economic disadvantage of the Soviet Union. The study argues that these factors in combination led the Soviets, notably Gorbachev, to conclude that continuing the cold war confrontation was a losing proposition. Moreover, the breakup of the Warsaw Pact and the reduction of Soviet conventional, but not unusable strategic nuclear forces to defensive size and configuration make a resumption of the European confrontation extremely unlikely.

The shape of the post-cold war world, emphasizing the Third World, is then considered. The absence of major power

confrontation in the First World will accentuate the ongoing instability of the Third World. The roots of instability in the Third World are political, economic, and social in nature and include debt to the First World, burgeoning population, maldistribution of food, grinding poverty, economic underdevelopment and maldistribution of economic resources, infrastructural deficiencies, the need for political development and stability, and environmental degradation. As long as these underlying causes persist, outbreaks of organized physical violence will be their continuing symptom.

The study then moves to the pattern of Third World conflict. In the past, this pattern was conditioned—and in some ways moderated—by a threat of escalation to an East-West confrontation with potential nuclear consequences that is now receding. The two basic types of future Third World conflict are internal conflicts within Third World states and regional wars between regional powers. The most common form of internal war remains insurgency—with some variations—often placing the United States in the potential role of counterinsurgent. Counterinsurgency has been a problem for the United States, and some indicators of likely success or failure are suggested. Regional conflicts are longstanding, but are now exacerbated by the possession of very large arsenals containing very lethal munitions (e.g., chemical weapons) and ballistic means of delivery.

The study concludes with some implications of these changes for the Army. It argues that future Third World conflicts are very unlike the European-style scenarios upon which the United States has based its military preparations in the past, thereby requiring a reorientation in how the Army and the government more generally organizes itself to deal with so-called low-intensity conflict. If the Army is to make an important contribution to the interagency process likely to emerge to deal with the future, it must adapt in two ways. First, it needs to devote more of its attention to the problem of dealing politically and militarily with Third World conflicts. Second, it must develop a greater cultural understanding about the environments in which Third World conflicts occur.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As 1990 drew toward an end, the cold war confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union and the pattern of international relations that had accompanied the cold war were effectively drawing to an end as well. In November 1990, the cold war superpowers met with the other 32 members of the Convention on Security and Cooperation (CSCE) and signed, along with their NATO and Warsaw Pact allies, a conventional arms agreement which, when fully implemented, will make future superpower conflict in Europe an unlikely eventuality. Similar progress in strategic nuclear arms under the rubric of the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) will probably follow in the trail of the conventional agreement.

The result is a new landscape very unfamiliar to those honed by and conditioned to the structure and tensions of the cold war. The edifices of the cold war—the Iron Curtain separating East and West, the Berlin Wall, half of the opposing alliance systems—have disappeared in less than a year's time since the revolutions of 1989 swept Communist regimes out of power throughout Eastern Europe and thereby effectively dismantled the system so painstakingly erected over a period of 40 years.

The international system has come full circle. At the end of World War II, the statesmen attempting to organize the ensuing peace looked out at the world and saw two alternative visions. One vision was based on continuation of the postwar collaboration between the victorious allies, especially the United States and the Soviet Union. Although most doubted that outcome, they made provision for it in the United Nations Charter that was to be the blueprint for the postwar world. In

writing the Charter provisions for collective security (Chapter VII), they devised a means for organizing the peace in which collaboration "was not necessarily certain, but was certainly necessary."[1]

The model of cocperation, of course, was not to be, and by the time that North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950, the alternate vision was in place. That vision, based on the image of noncooperation where the two major powers formed opposing alliances based on their different world views, was also sanctioned by the U.N. in Article 51 of the Charter, which guaranteed that nothing in the Charter abrogated the right of individual or collective defense by the members. That provision, of course, justified the opposing alliance structures in Europe that were the hallmarks of the cold war system.

That system of cold war alliances has collapsed in the East and the evolution toward a new European security arrangement is well under way in the West. As revolution swept Eastern Europe and the ragged edge of reform blew through the Soviet Union, the bases of confrontation evaporated. The heart of the disagreement had always been ideological—communism versus noncommunism. The nations of Eastern Europe shunted communism aside without a second thought, and by the end of 1990, the Soviets had abandoned the shibboleth in all but name. With nothing left fundamentally to disagree about, there was little reason to maintain the confrontation. Francis Fukuyama's "end of history,"[2] the triumph of the Western ideals of political and economic freedom (democracy and market capitalism) was complete; the remaining questions are about how to accommodate the former Communist states into the non-Communist world.

The transition is not without its dangers. In both the Soviet Union and former Eastern (now Central) Europe, freedom has entailed the right to assert old grievances based in nationalism and expressed in unnatural political boundaries that frustrate nationalist aspirations. These disagreements carry within them the tinder for violence that leads one author to assert that we will come to miss the cold war.[3] The implications of the potential breakup of the Soviet Union and of ethnic and nationalist unrest

in Central Europe, however, pale as compared to the confrontation of the cold war.

As the cold war confrontation dissipates, the other image from the post-1945 period returns: a world of cooperation and collaboration. The resuscitation of the United Nations system as it was originally intended seems a probable part of the legacy of the breakdown of the cold war system. Saddam Hussein, in a perverse sense, goaded the change by his action in Kuwait which spawned U.S.-U.S.S.R. overt cooperation through the U.N. Security Council—the vehicle of collective security—operating as it was intended for the first time ever.

Although it is much clearer in retrospect than it was in prospect, the events that burst so dramatically on the scene over the past year or more had been building for most of the 1980s. The motors of change were dual: a "necessary peace" between the superpowers created by the nuclear balance[4]; and a growing economic imbalance between East and West that threatened to consign the East to Third World status. These forces collectively worked to cause Gorbachev to "cancel" the cold war; because they will continue to operate in the post-cold war system, they merit some discussion.

Necessary Peace and Economic Imbalance.

Politico-military and economic influences both worked during the 1980s to make ending the cold war necessary and desirable. Briefly stated, the impact of nuclear weapons was to make superpower military confrontation increasingly unthinkable; because any confrontation between East and West was potentially a nuclear war, such wars became unthinkable as well. On the economic plane, the 1970s and 1980s saw an unprecedented expansion of the wealth of the West that was not matched by the Eastern bloc. This trend became increasingly obvious and unacceptable as the decade continued.

The nuclear dynamic was, or at least should have been, the more obvious influence. Over time, the leadership on both sides had concluded that nuclear war especially since it had the potential for escalation to an all-out exchange, was simply not a rational element of national power. Bernard Brodie's 1946

entreaty that in a nuclear world the chief—possibly only—utility of military force was deterrence[5] became increasingly obvious to all concerned; American Presidents as far back as Eisenhower had reached that conclusion, as had Soviet leaders at least back to Khrushchev.

It took the ascension to power of Mikhail S. Gorbachev to take the logic of necessary peace—where the superpowers are deterred not by goodwill toward one another, but out of the reasoned fear of the consequences of war—to its conclusion. A nuclear weapons inventory which, if employed, could bring about the assured destruction of society meant that not only were nuclear wars unacceptable, but that all wars between the nuclear powers were unacceptable. That being the case, the dreadfully expensive continuing confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact had become increasingly hollow and ritualistic. Neither side was going to start a war for fear that it would escalate; in that case, why maintain the confrontation?

This logic intermingled with the economic rationale. During the 1970s and early 1980s, mostly while Leonid Brezhnev was the Soviet leader, the Soviet economy had ground to a halt at the same time that expanding technology and privatization of economic activity were creating a great boom in the West—notably Japan, the United States, and the countries of the European Community (EC). When Gorbachev came to power in 1984, a group of dissident intellectuals who formed his support and advisory base identified this "period of stagnation" and told him that a continuation of the old Stalinist internal and external policies would only make matters worse.

Gorbachev was effectively whipsawed. His country remained a military superpower by virtue of the possession of nuclear weapons it could not use, but its economy was descending to Third World status. In that grim circumstance, change was not optional; only its depth and pace were negotiable.

The heart of the matter was the need to make the economy competitive. To do so, the Soviets absolutely needed to catch up in the emerging high technology of computing and telecommunications that was fueling Western economic

vitality. To do so required fundamental internal reform and a changed foreign policy.

The result was *glasnost, perestroika,* and the "new political thinking." *Glasnost* and *perestroika* were aimed at internal reform; undoing the rigid, centrally controlled Stalinist command economy that not only was not producing, but which critically undercut the kind of incentives to excel that stand at the base of the high technology revolution. At the same time, the Soviets desperately needed the help of the West, and especially access to Western high technology which was denied to them on cold war, national security grounds.

In that circumstance, political democratization at home and ending the cold war competition went hand in hand. As long as the cold war competition continued, the Soviets were going to be locked out of the general prosperity; thanks to modern telecommunications, the difference between Eastern bloc and Western living standards was beamed on television screens throughout the East. Moreover, unravelling the cold war had a potential "peace dividend" of resources that could, across time, be applied to economic modernization (and, not coincidentally, to advanced military technology, at which the Soviets were also beginning to lag). The Soviet leader undoubtedly did not anticipate all the problems that would be created when he uncorked the bottle of change, but he really had no choice but to take the chance.

In the short period of little more than a year, the results have been dramatic. The old cold war structure is in ashes, and it is difficult to see how the old contention could be reactivated, at least in its original form. There remain loose ends in the dismantling of the old order, and not all the contours of the new order are clear. What is clear, however, is that the new system will not resemble the old system in important ways, and that change will have deep implications for the way we organize and think about the use of military force. The most obvious implication, in terms of international concerns with national security import, will be a gradual shift in focus from an East-West to a North-South orientation.

Continuing Influences.

The dual forces of nuclear weapons balance and technology-driven economic expansion will continue to be important dynamics in the post-cold war world. The role of nuclear weapons will no longer be principally for the superpowers to deter one another—although that will be a by-product of the continued presence of diminished but still large arsenals. The arsenals will continue to be pointed pretensively at one another (at who else would you aim them?) as a relic of the cold war and as a reminder of what constitutes military superpower status. As the deterrent relationship between the two erodes, the question will logically be raised whether superpower nuclear weapons can somehow play a deterrent role against the emergence of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Third World. This would be a new and novel role for these weapons, but one worth exploring in a proliferated world of chemical, agents of biological origin (ABO), and nuclear weapons.

The continuing impact of technology will, if anything, expand, but its impact will be differential. In the broadest terms, the technological competition between the Big Three of the North (United States, Japan and EC) and the Third World has already widened measurably, if unevenly. What this means is that the gap between the richest and the poorest nations has become more like a chasm. With the exception of the nations of the former Second (Communist) World, standards of living in the North are increasing greatly. Standards of living in most of the Third World are declining in absolute as well as relative terms, to the point that, as one observer put it recently, for many in the South "life remains a wretched, uncertain prospect."[6]

The gap is, however, differential. Some states, and especially the so-called newly industrialized countries (NICs) concentrated in the Pacific Rim, have broken out of the Third World mold and are challenging the North. Countries such as the "Four Tigers" (Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore) adopted economic policies in areas such as infrastructure development, education, and fiscal responsibility—largely under guidelines prepared by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD

or World Bank)—that have made them attractive to foreign private investors. As a result, they are sharing in the general prosperity of the North and can be expected to be valued supporters of a stable international order.[7]

The bootstrapping of some largely Asian nations into economic prosperity is a part of the general internationalization of the world economy that occurred during the 1980s. In essence, three things happened during the decade, all of which were directly related to the technological revolution. First, great advances in computing and telecommunications and the commercialization of the fruits of those advances enhanced the productive bases of the countries in which the advances were occurring. Second, the telecommunications part of the revolution facilitated development of a global economic network of production and financial activity. Corporate activity expanded as the ability to communicate instantaneously worldwide expanded, and monetary and other resources could flow easily about the world as well. Third, this greater facility for movement and communication spawned a much expanded level of international commerce.

The epitome of this phenomenon, coming of age in the 1990s, is the stateless corporation, an exponential expansion of the the multinational corporation (MNC) of the 1960s. The older image of the MNC is generally a company based in one country but doing business (making and selling things) in several countries; its national affiliation was clearly identifiable and it was subject to reasonable levels of national control. The stateless corporation, on the other hand, is an MNC that is so international in ownership, management, workforce, and product mix that it is difficult to identify with any one state—and even more difficult for one state to manage or control. It is important in the current context because these corporations represent the wave of the future in the evolving world market economy; the investments they make or do not make in Third World countries will have a great deal to do with which countries become active parts of the world order and hence stabilizing forces.

The differential impact of the general prosperity in the Third World is important for at least two reasons. First, those who

become part of the general prosperity will form the pillars of how the international order evolves in the Third World. If the example of the Pacific Rim states is any indication, these "winners" are more likely than not to evolve into westernized, democratic societies which will adopt moderate policies and have a stake in order and stability in the Third World generally. Those countries excluded from the prosperity, conversely, will have little incentive to support the order. Second, a system of "haves" and "have nots" is going to be more difficult to sustain now than in the past. One of the outgrowths of the telecommunications revolution has been global television, which makes international phenomena much more transparent than in the past; those left out will know what they are missing, and if they have to, they may simply try to knock down the doors shutting them out.

This all suggests that there are both positive and negative prospects in the continuing influence of nuclear weapons and economic expansion. In the cold war system, there was little evidence that major powers might deter Third World countries from engaging in conflict; whether superpower nuclear threats can dissuade Third World countries from using, for instance, chemical weapons is therefore problematical, but nonetheless well worth exploring. At the same time, the more countries that enter the positive-sum economic competition, the greater global stability is likely to be. At this point, the distribution of resources both within and between Third World countries is highly unequal and getting worse. This is particularly poignant in those areas where standards of living are actually declining. Where equities occur and vital interests are adversely affected, heavily armed Third World states such as Iraq have already demonstrated their willingness to use force to obtain those interests. As one recent author put it, "International economic policies that ignore the importance of restoring Third World growth and stability would bode ill for the longer term security environment."[8]

Cold War Legacies.

For better or worse, cold war considerations influenced the pattern and nature of conflict in the Third World for almost 40 years, and the residue of that influence remains. Most of the

problems of the Third World did not and still do not have much to do with the ideological and geopolitical competition between the United States and the Soviet Union that defined the cold war. The needs of the Third World are developmental, the imperatives to build viable national societies, polities, and economies. To these underlying concerns, the cold war powers brought an overlay of their competition and superimposed that competition on the legitimate concerns of Third World countries. As the cold war recedes from the Third World, that influence will likely recede as well; the result will not be to contract the number of conflicts within Third World countries but to change their complexion. Freed of superpower influence, in some cases the problems could actually get worse.

The purpose of the cold war competition in the South was influence and geopolitics. In its most positive sense, it took the form of promoting like-minded regimes and movements, thereby adding states to the "rosters" of Communist or anti-Communist adherents. Often, however, the motivation was simply to deny influence to the other side. When the geopolitical ambitions of the competitors came into conflict with the interests of the countries in which the competition was occurring, the interests of the Third World countries almost always lost.

The competition evolved over time.[9] Before the process of decolonization occurred during the 1940s and 1950s, there was, of course, no Third World in which to compete. As the Third World emerged, the United States was the first competitor, using its superior economic position to gain influence in the 1950s and early 1960s. The Vietnam experience diverted American attention away from the region more generally, and thereby allowed the Soviets an entree.

Under the banner of support for "wars of national liberation" (first enunciated by Nikita Khrushchev in 1956 as part of his "secret speech" to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union), the Soviets became active in supporting Third World movements in the middle 1970s, in places such as Angola, Mozambique and eventually Afghanistan. In the wake of Vietnam, Americans became suspicious of, and wary

about, the Third World generally, in the process basically ceding the competition to a Leonid Brezhnev-led Soviet Union. Only when Mikhail S. Gorbachev and his "new political thinking," which emphasizes noninterference in the affairs of sovereign states, came to power did the competition moderate. The end of the cold war and the financial distress of trying to continue the competition have helped call it off. In all likelihood, both superpowers, as part of their more general condominium, will see mutual, cooperative rather than competitive interests in most Third World areas in the future.

The Third World remains volatile even with cold war stimulants to conflict muted. Two broad sources of conflict remain. Within many Third World states, the struggle for political power continues, often spilling over into violent confrontation. At the same time, regional conflicts between traditional rivals remain as sources of continuing stress on the evolving world order.

The residue of the cold war affects both sets of problems. There are, for instance, ongoing insurgencies and counterinsurgencies in a number of Third World countries where superpower assistance or sponsorship has been important, and affects the future outcomes of these struggles. Under the guise of the Reagan Doctrine, for instance, the United States remains involved with the *mujahadeen* in Afghanistan and with residual interests in Nicaragua, and the Soviets have yet to extricate themselves completely from places such as Angola and Mozambique. Both sides are still involved in cold-war derived counterinsurgencies, El Salvador for the United States and Afghanistan for the Soviets. While neither side appears to be in the current business of signing up revolutions, their fingerprints remain on a number of ongoing difficulties.

Regional conflicts remain as well. During the cold war, the tendency was for the Soviets to "sponsor" (i.e. be the principal source of support for) one side, say India, while the United States was the principal benefactor of the other, as in Pakistan. The major vehicle of this sponsorship was the provision of military assistance in its various forms.

The legacy of this sponsorship was dual. On the one hand, superpower military assistance programs were often quite generous and had the effect of arming Third World states to the teeth with increasingly sophisticated and lethal arsenals that rivalled in size and lethality many states of the North. The cold war has receded but the weapons remain.

On the other hand, superpower intrusion into regional situations provided some leverage to the superpowers and reverse leverage to the clients that is not currently evident. The ability to arm also implied the ability to withhold arms, spare parts, and the like and thereby to influence how clients used their weapons. The weapons remain, but the influence does not.

Iraq and Operation Desert Shield is a textbook case in point. Thanks to a long period of Soviet sponsorship augmented internationally by the long Iran-Iraq War, the Iraqis were indeed armed to the teeth when they invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Their arsenal was such that their former sponsor had little if any influence over what the government of Saddam Hussein plotted. During the cold war period, it is likely that the Soviets would have had enough influence to dissuade Saddam from the invasion. There was certainly precedence for doing so; the Soviets had stopped another client, Syria, from intervening in the Jordanian Civil War in 1970. Much of what President Bush talks about as the "new world order" outcome of Desert Storm is in determining what the international rules will be for dealing with these kinds of cold war residues.

CHAPTER 2

THIRD WORLD CONFLICT AFTER THE COLD WAR

The end of the cold war confrontation between East and West does not directly affect conflict in the Third World. The reason for this is simple enough: the cold war overlay on those conflicts was always largely artificial and peripheral. The real causes of conflict were not theological debates over Marxism and its alternatives (which the end of the cold war has laid to rest anyway). They were, and are, debates about survival and then development to allow the countries of the South into the prosperity of the North.

This is not to say that the pattern of Third World conflict will be unaffected by a receding cold war system. As already noted, there is a residue in the continuation of conflicts where the superpowers previously had an interest and competed on opposite sides, and the cold war opponents left the field of cold war "battle" in the Third World strewn with arms. Prior to looking at the real sources of continuing Third World conflict, it is useful to look at some of the second and third order effects of ending the cold war in the South.

The Receding Cold War.

If it is true that most of the superpower interests in the Third World were about as pure as those of the European colonists a century earlier (i.e. personal aggrandizement, "points" in the ideological competition), then removing the competition should aid a transition toward addressing the real problems. A Bush administration official, for instance, suggests that in the past, Soviet and American interests in Third World conflicts, and especially in the management thereof, were three-fold. First, there was an interest in maintaining the investment each had

in its particular ally in the conflict. Second, there was an interest in containing conflict so that it did not spill over and sour superpower relations more generally. Third, and most importantly, was an interest in avoiding a regional conflict escalating to general conflict between the superpowers themselves.[10]

These are, of course, hardly altruistic motives, and they suggest that the central concern in looking at conflict was how it would affect the superpowers, not the Third World countries themselves. Thus, one possible effect of removing the cold war could be to remove the distortion imposed by superpower competition. If it were the case that competition would be replaced by an honest effort to address and solve the real problems, then this would be quite positive. The other possibility is that the absence of competition will lead to the realization there are very few inherent strategic interests in Third World countries, making the expenditure of resources "more the exception than the rule in the future."[11]

The prospect that the North will simply withdraw from the South leads a number of observers to argue that the absence of the cold war will simply lead to the further "marginalization"[12] of the Third World, leaving it even further out of the mainstream. In its simplest effect, widening the gap is certainly unlikely to make conflicts within and between Third World countries go away; it could even make them worse.

Even in the absence of the cold war competition, there are at least three good reasons to expect a continuation of conflict and violence in the Third World.[13] First, the withdrawal of the superpowers not only removes a source of friction in the region, it also removes a source of restraint. In many parts of the world—the Arab-Israeli Middle East comes obviously to mind—cold war considerations demanded and even nurtured a certain level of conflict. The Soviets, for instance, could not really have wanted a settlement to the dispute, because, in the absence of the need for Soviet arms to fight the Israelis, why would states like Syria have any need for the atheistic infidels? At the same time, nobody wanted the conflict to get completely out of hand for fear of uncontrollable escalation. The confrontation between the United States and the Soviets and

its rapid resolution during the Yom Kippur War of 1973 represents both the dangers of escalation and the resolute interest both sides had in keeping those conflicts within bounds that may have been dangerous to the participants but not necessarily to the superpowers.

As the superpowers retreat, these restraints are removed as well, leading to the second point. Even without the cold war overlay, there still remain deep divisions—regional conflicts between states over boundaries, religion and historical enmities, and political instabilities within states—and there is no outside party at the moment to moderate those conflicts. The result could be that "the future could be one of more rather than less conflict at the regional level."[14]

The third reason that, at least in the interim, conflict will not abate is because regional powers may see little incentive in alleviating the problems. What political incentive, for instance, does Pakistan have to back away from its claims to Kashmir, which nearly resulted in yet another war over that province in the summer of 1990?

That there is not strong outside regulation from the superpowers will likely become apparent to the leaders of Third World regional powers, who will conclude the superpower influence has been badly compromised, for two basic reasons. The first and most obvious is economic: one of the major reasons for that part of Gorbachev's new thinking calling for less Third World involvement is that he concluded his country could no longer afford an effort that yielded marginal results and antagonized the United States. The same is true of the United States. The second reason is military: what is particularly expensive—for most purposes too expensive—is military intervention beyond fairly modest shows of force with marginal effects.

Additionally, the other major form of leverage, the supply of weapons, is no longer so strong. The international market for weapons, thanks to what one author has called the "international deregulation"[15] of the system and what I have called its "privatization"[16] means there are plenty of alternate government and private purveyors of arms. The threat by the

Americans or Soviets to withhold arms is no longer much of a disincentive to anyone with money or a line of credit.

The Desert Shield operation in the Saudi desert exemplifies these situations at their worst. In the heyday of the cold war, the Iraqi action against Kuwait would have been quite unlikely; Iraq was a client state of the Soviets heavily dependent on Soviet arms. Faced with the possibility that compliance in an invasion would have had escalatory prospects, the Soviets would have stopped it, as suggested earlier. Thanks to international largesse during the Iran-Iraq War, however, Saddam Hussein had plenty of arms and no effective restraints from anyone in the international community. One of the most important rules of the new international system is how it reimposes order on these kinds of conflict.

Underlying Causes of Third World Conflict.

To this point, the North-South relationship has been discussed primarily in military terms, and many of the manifestations of that relationship have indeed been military in the past. It is, however, part of the legacy of the cold war that its veneer contained a heavy dose of the militarization of problems that were not inherently military.

The heart of most conflict in the Third World is political, "based on deep social, economic, and political antagonisms, and as such their outcomes hinge on political objectives."[17] These political problems manifest themselves both internally and externally. Internally, they tend to cluster around the general scarcity of virtually all forms of resource, making the struggle for survival among groups an everyday fact of life. Fragile economies and polities are most susceptible to the world around them; for instance, increases in the price of petroleum attendant to the Iraq-Kuwait situation had their most devastating effects in the developing world. Externally, disputed borders, minority groups trapped in countries where the majority do not share their nationality, and ethnic and religious differences form some of the more obvious sources of dispute.

Before looking at some of these problems individually, two comments are in order. First, a great deal of the Third World

holds the North responsible for many of their current problems. This is particularly true of Subsaharan Africa and the Middle East. The culprit was the colonial experience which, among other things, destroyed social structures, political boundaries and relationships, and economic patterns. When decolonization occurred, the result was countries with desperate poverty but little preparation to gain affluence, badly drawn political borders, and the absence of modern social structures. We in the North may not think of these as "our" problems; people in the South "know" they are our fault. Second, the problems are deep, intractable, and getting worse. It is unlikely that these problems will be solved without massive public and private assistance from North to South, something the "Group of 77" (the original membership of the Third World "movement" was 77) have been telling us for a long time. The question is whether we will feel motivated or impelled to act this time.

Different observers organize the problems of the "other world" in various ways. The coiners of the phrase other world, for instance, categorize those problems into five characteristics: a history of dependence on other parts of the world; inequalities in the distribution of wealth; population explosion; maldistribution or shortage of natural resources; and a low management and technological capacity.[18] Although the lists differ, the problems are much the same.

For present purposes, I would like to suggest the following list of representative ills that retard the Third World and which, individually and collectively, virtually guarantee the continuation of conflict in the region. These are: foreign debt and its service; growing population and its associated demographic impact; problems of food quantity and distribution; grinding poverty for the vast majority; economic underdevelopment and maldistribution; educational and infrastructure deficiencies; political stability; and, most recently, environmental degradation. They are offered in no particular priority.

The triggering event of much of the economic misery and lack of material progress in many Third World countries is *accumulated debt*, and more specifically, the *debt-service*

burden. The root of the problem was public and private, but especially private bank, lending to selected Third World countries during the 1970s. Money was loaned in large quantities on the presumption, often poorly monitored, that it would be invested in so-called "self-liquidating" developmental projects (enterprises the profits from which could be used to repay the loans). Unfortunately, many of the projects were flawed and borrowed money was used for non-self-liquidating social welfare use.

More importantly, the loans have come due and have to be paid out of export earnings. The debt-service burden is a ratio of the amount of *interest* payments on accumulated borrowing divided by the amount of foreign exchange earned from exports, money which would otherwise be used for developmental purposes. The problem is that the ratio has approached and in some cases exceeded unity, i.e. interest payments alone exceed foreign earnings.

There are two results of this predicament. First, developing countries with debt service problems have little money left for development or satisfying consumer demands. Moreover, the private banks, facing the prospect that select countries might simply renege on their loans, have become extremely leery about offering further loans. Second, in a systemic manner, the effect has been to reverse the flow of capital from North to South. According to one analyst, the "net negative flow" of funds from Southern to Northern countries for 1988 was $43 billion, of which $31 billion in net flowed from 17 largest debtors.[19] In terms of private transaction, "all debtor countries repaid more to commercial banks each year from 1985 to 1988 than they received."[20]

The debt problem is differential in the sense that it is concentrated geographically. The worst problems are in Latin America—especially Brazil and Mexico. Africa, for instance, has a much smaller debt problem because, possibly fortunately, it was not viewed as a very promising area in which to invest in the 1970s.

The second problem, *population*, is faced by almost all countries in the Third World. As a problem, the question of

population has essentially three aspects. The first is the sheer growth in the size of the global population. In 1980, the population of the world was about 4.4 billion; by the year 2000, it will be about 6.2 billion, and world population is not supposed to begin to level off until well into the 21st century. Moreover, in the year 2000, over one person in three living on the planet will reside in either the People's Republic of China or India.[21]

The second aspect of the population problem is demographic. On the one hand, population growth is physically differential: of the 1.8 billion people who will be added to the population, less than 200 million will be added in the North, adding to a south-to-north migration problem already emerging. On the other hand, the population in the developing world, thanks largely to modern medicine, is aging, while the population in the South is predominantly young. In many Third World countries, the median age is under 20; when such a population faces large-scale unemployment and underemployment, there is a powder keg waiting to be lit.

The third aspect of the population problem is its political and social consequences. Population growth, in many Third World countries, is occurring faster than economic growth, thereby contributing to lowering standards of living. Increasingly, the population masses are moving to large urban areas that are unprepared for them physically and do not have jobs for them. The result is a pattern of discontent with explosive political ramifications. As example, the population of Mexico City is projected at 30 million by the year 2000.

All of these additional people add to what some refer to as the "people-food" connection.[22] Were the problem of population growth not pernicious enough on its own, it is exacerbated by the fact that it is occurring in the Southern hemisphere, where modern agricultural methods have only begun to take hold. Thus, the problem of *food* is third on our list.

The food problem is often misrepresented. The cause of the widespread hunger and starvation in many countries is not the worldwide production of inadequate amounts of food; we have not approached closely the globe's "carrying capacity" for

food and will not soon. The global food problem is one of distribution: food is not getting where it is needed. In some cases, such as the Soviet Union, the problem is an inefficient transportation and distribution system that results in upwards of three-quarters of the potato crop, for instance, rotting in the field each year.

The more appalling situation is where withholding of food is done for political reasons. The most obvious cases in point are in the Horn of Africa, where the Ethiopian government has, in effect, attempted to starve the rebels in Eritrea by denying them access to food from the outside. Similar charges have been made against the Sudanese. Justified or not, the continued application of blanket sanctions against Iraq would almost certainly result in similar charges against the United States and its allies in the Persian Gulf.

The fourth problem, related to the first three, is the *grinding poverty* in which many people in the South find themselves, a situation which has actually gotten worse due to forces in place during the 1980s such as net capital outflow and population pressures.[23] This is also a problem of direct relevance to the North, because those who find themselves in utterly hopeless circumstances are easy prey to appeals from political forces that promise to assist them. Moreover, the 1980s saw the global emergence of South-North migration that will only get worse unless something is done about that poverty. As one analyst vividly describes it:

> In increasing number...the wretched and the persecuted seek entry into the industrialized countries in search of refuge and opportunity. Neither physical barriers nor bureaucratic labyrinths can stem this human tide. The only effective constraint is hope for security within the developing countries.[24]

The United States has already experienced both this phenomenon and the frustrations of trying to stem it through exclusionary practices; unless the root causes are addressed, it can only get worse.

Economic underdevelopment and maldistribution of economic assets are endemic to most of the Third World. The notions refer to two different but interrelated phenomena.

Economic development refers to the overall condition of the economic system. Indicators of development (the absence of which indicates underdevelopment) include diversification of the economy, specialization of production on goods produced at comparative advantage, satisfaction of basic consumer needs, an efficient agricultural system capable of feeding both the rural and urban populations, and provision of basic infrastructural services (e.g. roads, electricity).[25] Maldistribution, on the other hand, refers to the equity with which economic resources are distributed among groups and individuals in the population. In the typically underdeveloped countries, wealth—both monetary and property—is closely held by a small minority (elite), while the mass receives very little.

The extent of underdevelopment and maldistribution varies among Third World countries. One observer, for instance, categorizes countries in the Southern Hemisphere into five types: high-income oil-producing countries; industrialized countries with relatively low levels of debt; industrialized countries with high levels of debt; potentially newly industrialized countries; and primary commodity-exporting countries.[26] The problems of underdevelopment and maldistribution increase as one descends the typology, which is based in descending rank order of wealth.

Those experiencing the greatest levels of underdevelopment are in a sort of double bind. In order to solve their problems, all of which require the infusion of economic assistance, they must be able to make an appeal to public or private sources of assistance to overcome their structural difficulties. Their very poverty, however, speaks of their "geopolitical insignificance" and hence, especially with East-West rivalry and its consequent competition in the Third World ended, "the capacity to play East against West is gone."[27] Private sources, basically banks, are reluctant—particularly after their 1970s experience—to provide loans to those with questionable ability to repay; underdeveloped countries are notoriously bad credit risks.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was widespread belief that the secret for development lay in providing assistance to those

aspects of Third World society that, when developed, would make them attractive to private investment, and thus to an emphasis on *infrastructure* development, and especially in improved *education.* The logic underlying this notion was two-fold. First, there simply is not enough public (governmental) developmental assistance available in the West to accomplish the total task of developing the Third World, meaning that development ultimately relies upon participation by the private sector. Such involvement, in addition to being allegedly more efficient, is also more compatible with Western value systems than a sole reliance of public monies.

Second, however, private firms are not going to be attracted to countries unless the conditions are such as to provide a reasonable prospect of success (profit). The conditions which make a country attractive include such things as a stable political system, a trained, educated workforce, "responsible" fiscal and economic policies, and a strong supporting infrastructure—in other words, the conditions normally associated with a developed country. Where the resources for developing infrastructure, *including a strong* educational system, are not present, the only way to make the transformation is for the government to invoke harsh economic policies to enforce public saving and minimize public and private consumption to allow resources to be diverted to basic infrastructural ends.

None of these kinds of acts are politically popular: people like to spend and consume; not to be taxed or forced to save. As a result, it may be politically suicidal for a Third World government to take the kinds of action that will make it economically attractive for the kind of investment that will ultimately lead to prosperity and political stability. In a few countries, notably those in the Pacific Rim to which allusion has already been made, that "bullet" has been bitten, and the result has been prosperity and growing stability. Such a path seems so compelling that one wonders why developing countries do not see the wisdom of acting "responsibly." Even a cursory examination of American economic and fiscal

policies during the 1980s, however, demonstrates that carrying on such programs is easier said than done.

Political development and stability are closely related to the condition of a nation's economy. Political freedom (democracy) and economic freedom (market economics) are closely related to one another; greater economic prosperity and equity produce demands for political participation, and politically free people increasingly demand economic opportunity. During the 1980s, the growth of political democracy tended to occur in those countries where there was also economic prosperity, such as those in the Pacific Rim where the "tolerance and even support for nondemocratic regimes"[28] eroded.

Economic development is a necessary but not sufficient condition for political development and stability. Political stability is grounded in governmental *legitimacy*, the grant by the people of the right to govern. When governmental authority is based upon willing participation, the result is likely to be political democracy and stability. When it is not, the alternative base of authority is coercion, which has within it the seeds of instability.

Two sets of problems undermine legitimacy in the Third World (including the Soviet Union in its current situation). The first is economic underdevelopment in its various guises; it is difficult for a people to pledge their allegiance to a system that provides them with misery, especially in a world where all understand misery is not universal. That is why economic development is a necessary ingredient in political stability.

It is not both necessary *and* sufficient because Third World countries typically face other challenges that arise from the fact that most of the Third World suffers from either (or both) the problems of *multinationalism* and latent or manifest *irredentism.* Multinationalism occurs whenever more than one nationality (a group of people who consider themselves to be a distinct national group) reside within a nation-state. This condition is virtually universal in Africa and the Middle East, is present in Southern and Central Europe, and in parts of Asia as well. Where multinationalism is not overcome by an

overarching loyalty to the state, the country's government cannot pass the developmental test of dealing with "intercommunal conflict."[29] Irredentism occurs when a national border separates members of a national group that would prefer to live in a single state, who form a separatist (irredentist) movement. The Kurds and various minority groups (e.g. the Azeris, the Moldavians) in the Soviet Union exemplify this phenomenon.

Solving the problem of political parochialism (what used to be called nation-building) is the other necessary element in creating legitimate governments. Economic success can ease communal differences, and solving the problem of legitimacy can make a country more attractive to development. Doing so is, however, easier said than done, as John Chipman points out:

> The tragedy in so many parts of the developing world is that the practice of leaders with narrow bases of support is rarely such as to create an atmosphere of ordered and peaceful dissent... {because of} the felt need by many Third World leaders to defend institutional, sectarian or ethnic interests.[30]

A new set of Third World problems, which are part of a growing North-South dialogue, relate to *environmental degradation.* This is an issue of fairly recent concern, because one of the "advantages" of underdevelopment is that the people basically live off the earth without artificially and excessively taking from it. The pressures created by forces as diverse as economic development and population increase have become "important factors on the national security agendas of many countries."[31]

Deforestation and industrial pollution exemplify this problem. Deforestation is largely the result of actions taken by tropical countries (notably Brazil in the Amazon Basin) to convert into more "productive" uses equatorial rainforests that historically created a kind of green band around the Earth's middle. That band is slowly disappearing, with negative consequences for carbon dioxide content in the atmosphere. That problem, in turn, contributes to the global warming phenomenon, and it is estimated that already the countries of

Southern Hemisphere account for about 45 percent of the greenhouse effect.[32]

This amount is likely to increase in the future. One of the common projections is that the technologically superior Northern Hemisphere will increasingly transfer its dirty, objectionable, "rust bucket" industries, with their attendant polluting effects, to Southern Hemisphere countries desperate for any form of industry, thereby tipping the global pollutant balance toward the South.

This dynamic has created a North-South conflict where Northern admonitions to Third World nations to engage in environmentally sound practices sound unconvincingly sanctimonious. Environmentally damaging actions are often undertaken either to repay debt or for developmental purposes, both of which are laudatory. Coming in the form of rapid industrialization or resource exploitation where expensive environmental protection measures may be given secondary consideration, Third World nations face "the ire of Northern states now more ostensibly concerned about global environmental issues."[33]

Several summary points about this admitted hodge-podge of Third World problems should be made. First, they are fundamental, difficult and, until solved, will form the basis of instability that will, in some cases, lead to violence. Second, they are very different than the problems that were of primary concern in the cold war period; the agenda is altered. Third, these problems have been around for some time, and their persistence suggests that they will not disappear without some assistance from the North. Fourth, until they are solved, there will be a significant probability of instability in the evolving international system. Much of the solution is a matter of leadership in the Third World, and a key element for the 1990s may well be whether the kind of pragmatic, democratic leadership that appears to be coming to power in parts of Latin America, e.g., Mexico, Peru, Brazil, Chile, spreads more widely.

There is a fifth point that may be of the greatest significance in the current context. The problems suggested above are not

military problems in the orthodox sense, nor is their solution military in any traditional sense. Occasionally, they will manifest themselves in military terms such as insurgencies or terrorism for which military force may provide the short-term palliative. What these situations represent is a new, and significantly different, national security agenda.

CHAPTER 3

THE PATTERN OF THIRD WORLD CONFLICT

Although the conflicts in which the United States has found itself since World War II have all occurred in areas that are, or at the time were, in the Third World (Korea arguably is no longer, but certainly was in 1950), the United States has always been somewhat uncomfortable in these circumstances. There has always been, particularly in the military itself, a marked preference for thinking about and planning for the more familiar "conventional" conflicts on the European continent that represent the "worst case" threat to American interests. There has been a tendency to downgrade the importance and problems of Third World conflicts, treating them as smaller versions of the "real thing" and presuming that preparation for European war would somehow prepare us for other, lesser problems as well.

In the post-cold war world, of course, Third World conflict assumes a centrality it heretofore did not have, at least because it is the remaining part of the world in actual or potential turmoil. For this reason alone, conflict in the Third World will be the "source of renewed preoccupation for the national security community"[34] for the foreseeable future: it is where the action is. Moreover, wars in the South represent, according to two analysts, "the only political/military threat to our global position that is both serious and immediate and is likely to be so indefinitely."[35]

There is some clear ambivalence about Third World involvement in the new international order, as the debate over the Desert Storm operation demonstrates. The primary motivation for American involvement in Third World conflicts, with the exception of Operation Just Cause in Panama, has

been to counter Soviet-backed or other Communist forces, for instance in Korea, Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Grenada. With that motivation gone, there is less incentive for involvement in areas that are not otherwise greatly important to the United States. The Iraq-Kuwait situation is an obvious exception because of the geopolitical significance of the Persian Gulf region, but few other places come to mind as equivalents. As a result, it may well be true that "the global significance of local conflict in the Third World is much diminished."[36]

Whether, and in what cases, American military involvement will occur in future Third World conflicts is a policy question that goes beyond present purposes; what is important to understand is that if American armed forces are called to fight in the future, the most likely situations are Third World contingencies. For that reason, it is necessary to understand what is different about these conflicts, what forms they take and, thus, what problems they present for planning and execution.

Critical Points of Difference from "Conventional" War.

Thinking about the kinds of Third World military situations in which the United States might become involved requires a considerable reorientation, because these situations are themselves very different. In fact, it is even hard to discuss Third World conflict as *a* category, because it encompasses a broad array from fairly conventional wars (e.g. Iran-Iraq, India-Pakistan, Arab-Israeli), to various kinds of insurgencies and counterinsurgencies, to diverse activities such as those encompassed in the lower end of the operational continuum. Moreover, many of these are essentially *sui generis,* where "interests are variable, and the distribution of power and influence so diffuse."[37] With that rejoinder in mind, one can identify at least five ways in which Third World conflicts are different from more familiar, European-style conflicts.

First, these "wars of the third kind"[38] are more highly and obviously "political" than conventional wars. Particularly in the case of internal wars, the struggle is only partly military in the sense of winning by defeating the enemy's armed forces.

Instead, achieving the "better state of the peace" (an outcome where our political objectives are achieved)[39] requires gaining or regaining the loyalty of the population, an inherently political act which may be actually undercut by military actions that make sense on purely military grounds. The real objective is "the functioning and legitimacy of a government"[40], and, in these circumstances, political means and ends may actually contradict one another. In many cases, one of the most difficult problems the United States may face is identifying and influencing the government (or movement) it supports to engage in the kinds of *political* acts that can bring success.[41]

Second, the methods by which these kinds of wars are fought are significantly different. This is the case partly because most of these wars are fought in physical environments very different from those found in the Northern Hemisphere: steamy, swampy jungles; mountainous, jungle-covered terrain; or deserts where European-style formations and tactics are inappropriate, or impossible. In these kinds of circumstances, the traditional American emphasis on firepower and heavy forces may be not only inappropriate, but even counterproductive.

To make matters worse, the style of fighting is different, and often negates the advantages that a technologically superior force such as that of the United States brings to the fray. Although the forces of a country like Iraq are the exception, wars in equatorial areas more typically are fought in the style of Maoist guerrilla-mobile warfare whose strategies and tactics go back to Sun Tzu in China over 3,000 years ago.[42] Emphasizing small unit tactics, high mobility, and the avoidance of pitched battles except when victory is certain due to overwhelming advantage at the point of contact, these methods are extremely difficult to counter in a conventional manner.

Third, the conflicts that occur happen in alien cultures and political systems where different outcomes do not obviously affect American vital interests and where our lack of understanding sometimes leads to actions with unpredicted effects. Most Americans have difficulty identifying with the locales and causes of Third World conflicts, and they have to

be convinced of the need to assist in the accomplishment of different outcomes. Thus, political support tends to be difficult to arouse and sustain. Maintaining the Clausewitzian trinity of the army, the government, and the people is thus harder in Third World conflicts than elsewhere.

The concept of vital interest is the key here. Vital interests are normally defined as those meeting one or both of two interrelated criteria: first, a vital interest is a situation or condition on which the nation is unwilling to compromise; second, it is a situation over which the nation would be willing to go to war. When a vital interest is compromised, the ability of a country to carry on its most important missions is badly damaged to the point that the employment of military force is justified.[43]

The problem of vital interests is that the term is subjective: different people have different ideas about what is important enough to go to war over. Historically, the integrity of the Western Hemisphere and the political independence of Western Europe have been within the consensual vital interest of most Americans and certainly of a high enough percentage of the population to sustain a determination to employ military force.

Third World areas are not so unambiguously within the vital national interests of the country. Partly, this is because we do not have a long history of interaction with many Third World areas. Culturally, physically, and in other ways, they are quite unlike the United States and, until recently, there was not great immigration into this country from many Third World areas. The cold war competition made outcomes more important, but with that facade stripped away, the interests often seem too marginal to meet the vital interest criteria.

In that circumstance, the need for public support so dramatically identified by Harry Summers in *On Strategy*[44] and reiterated in the Weinberger Doctrine comes into play. The effect, according to a State Department analyst, has been that "except for special operations and short, overwhelming interventions, the direct application of United States combat forces has proved both politically and militarily infeasible."[45]

The fourth and related point deals with the consequences of various outcomes in the Third World. Because it is generally difficult to argue that "our side" losing would bring great harm to the United States or its interests elsewhere, it is difficult to argue effectively the need for American action to avoid outcomes that do not make much difference to Americans. As a result, any American action, either direct or indirect, will meet opposition on the basis of importance when it is proposed, and the outcomes, regardless of what they are, will be viewed differently by different groups. This is particularly difficult when (as is normally the case) a proposed action must compete with domestic claims on scarce resources.

In the cold war period, a justification for American involvement in Third World conflicts could generally be fashioned around the competition between East and West and the need to contain communism. The cold war created a level of interest not present otherwise in faraway places such as Afghanistan or Southeast Asia, where inherent American interests were basically absent.

In the post-cold war world, that overlay is gone, and inherent interests must assert themselves. In most cases, the vitality of interest is simply not persuasive in, for instance, most of Africa, a good deal of Asia, and even substantial parts of Central and especially South America.

The case of Afghanistan illustrates the point. In the Gorbachev period when the Brezhnev Doctrine (which asserted the "right" of the Soviet Union to come to the aid of "friendly, beleaguered" fellow socialist states) has been renounced, the Soviet Union might or might not conclude that the fall of a friendly regime in Kabul and its replacement with an Islamic fundamentalist regime warranted renewed Soviet intervention. Were it to do so, the action would most likely be justified out of fear of contagion to the Islamic republics of the Soviet Union itself rather than on Marxist grounds.

Should the Soviets reach such a conclusion and relate it to the United States (which, today, they would certainly do), what would be the American response? American interests in Afghanistan have not changed: there were no important ones

in 1979, and there still are not. In the cold war period, Soviet-American competition provided the rationale—mostly unopposed politically in the United States- -to condemn the action and eventually, under cover of the Reagan Doctrine, to funnel support to the *mujahadeen*. In the post-cold war world would our reaction be the same? Or would we support Gorbachev in his attempt to enforce a "new world order"? The answer is not at all clear in regard to a place where it *was* clear before; what will be the case in areas where such an assessment were not required earlier?

The fifth difference is in determining the propriety and form of military intervention in Third World conflicts. The undercutting of the cold war leaves old rationales in tatters, and the lack of clear and compelling vital interests makes justifications all the more difficult to make and sustain. Since many Third World conflicts are fought and organized along the lines of protracted conflict imbedded in mobile-guerrilla strategy, they often do not lend themselves to the quick, massive and decisive style that marked Just Cause in Panama and thus bypassed the need for sustaining public support by being over so quickly.

Moreover, these are often complex, "gray" kinds of conflict where it is difficult to establish clearly who the "good guys" are and how they should be treated. The cultural heritage of the United States demands that Americans find noble causes to support, and this is likely to be even truer in the post-cold war world. In the cold war period, American idealism often was sublimated to geopolitical notions based in communism and anticommunism, and that is obviously gone. The other American instinct, however, is to view the world in terms of the promotion of American ideals, principally political democracy, individual freedoms and civil liberty. As the triumph of the revolutions of 1989 spreads the democratic ethos, this will influence how we look at Third World situations as well. It will no longer be enough for movements or governments to be anti-Communist. Increasingly, "insurgents and counterinsurgents must demonstrate some adherence to democracy in order to be worthy of Congressionally appropriated assistance."[46]

The Pattern of Third World Conflict.

As suggested earlier, future conflict in the Third World is likely to be of two kinds and come from two sources. As has been the case in the past, a good deal of that conflict will be internal to Third World states as they continue to go through the difficult process of nation-building. Certain of these conflicts will take on the familiar coloration of insurgencies and counterinsurgencies, but with some differences in the areas of support and financing. To these internal problems must be added the problem of narcotics and its increasing relationship to insurgent groups and, in some cases, terrorism.

The other dimension of Third World conflict will be between underdeveloped nations, that which is now being called regional conflict, a new designation with a long past. Iraq's aggression in the Persian Gulf is being widely advertised as the precedent-setting example of this phenomenon within the new order. Whether this is true or not is debatable, because the Persian Gulf and Iraq's place in it may be unique in the world. What is not unique, however, is that Third World international conflicts are increasingly "enlivened" by startling additions of highly lethal and sophisticated arsenals that are a direct legacy of the cold war competition, but without the cold war constraints on old clients who are now the regional powers.

Internal Conflicts. Documents such as the *National Security Strategy of the United States* quite correctly identify a number of activities at the lower end of the operational continuum which are relevant to concerns about the Third World. In addition to insurgency and counterinsurgency, these include counterterrorism, counternarcotics, and peacekeeping as activities for which American military forces might be considered in the future.

It is something of an apples and oranges list, in the sense that very different tasks, skills and situations are encompassed under the same overarching umbrella. The problems presented by, and the means for dealing with, terrorist threats are political, legal, and paramilitary in nature, for instance, and peacekeeping (as opposed to creating a peace where one does not exist—peacemaking) requires particular attitudes and

skills that may be contradictory to the skills needed to be, for instance, a successful counterinsurgent.

For present purposes, discussion will be limited to the problem of insurgency and counterinsurgency, including the extension of this problem to the counternarcotics dilemma as expressed by the so-called "drug-insurgency nexus" ("the formation of politico-military enclaves controlled by traffickers allied with leftist, revolutionary groups").[47]

There are at least four reasons for this emphasis. First, insurgency/counterinsurgency represents a geographically widespread phenomenon that can be found on every continent in the world; as a means to an end, it will far outlive the end of the cold war. Second, it is among the most stressful Third World conflict varieties. Often, insurgencies are long and bloody, and it is expensive both in human and material terms to oppose them, as the American experience in El Salvador exemplifies. Third, insurgency will persist because its underlying causes—political, economic, and social misery—will persist. It is no coincidence that insurgencies are found most often in the poorest countries with the greatest problems. Fourth, countering insurgencies is not something at which the United States has exhibited the greatest skill and success in the past. If the United States is to prosper in the conflict milieu of the post-cold war system, some greater sophistication in this vital area is certainly called for.

The American experience in Third World insurgencies and counterinsurgencies suggests some caution for the future. One can start from the assumption that, in the future, the Reagan Doctrine will be inoperative except in holdover situations such as Afghanistan. The reason, simply put, is that there are unlikely to be ideologically hostile—especially Marxist—governments whose removal the United States would like to assist. Rather, the emphasis on stability in the new world order is most likely to be challenged by insurgent groups acting out of either some form of ideological, religious or ethnic zeal, or common criminality, as the *narcotraficantes* of South America. In turn, this suggests that most internal Third World situations into which the United States might venture will be in opposition to insurgencies.

Intervention in support of counterinsurgencies can be a journey through a minefield. In the past, anticommunism has provided the boost that sent the United States into material support for governments fighting insurgencies under the Nixon Doctrine, and even occasionally into direct intervention with American forces. With a few exceptions such as the fanatic *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) Maoist insurgency in Peru, the ideological tripwire is less likely to be evident, hopefully providing a somewhat more dispassionate analysis of whether, and in what cases, American help should be forthcoming. With no particular pretense of inclusiveness or completeness, I would suggest six cautionary questions to be answered with regard to future involvements.

- *What is Wrong Here?*

It is next to axiomatic that the United States does not become interested enough to involve itself in Third World conflicts until they are well underway and there is a significant likelihood the side on which we are considering assistance will lose without it. This is a phenomenon that one author calls the "brushfire corollary": "significant United States resources and attention can only be justified for areas of normally peripheral interest only when a situation of crisis has erupted."[48] Bacevich and his colleagues note the same phenomenon in their study of American involvement in El Salvador.[49]

This tendency creates at least two problems. First, if there were not some serious problem in a target country, an insurgency would be unlikely in the first place. The very existence of an insurgent movement should lead one to ask what is wrong with the government one is contemplating backing, since insurgencies that lack some level of popular support based in grievances against the government rarely survive. Second, when one waits until the insurgency reaches crisis proportions (such as moving from the guerrilla to the conventional stage of guerrilla/mobile warfare), the battle for the hearts and minds of men may well already have been lost. If that is so, the situation may be either hopeless or require more effort than the American public is willing to exert.

Put a slightly different way, insurgencies do not often get started against popularly elected, honest and efficient governments which have the backing of their people. An early question one must ask is whether the government can, or should, be saved.

- *How Do You Come Down on the "Side of the Angels"?*

The American people have a marked, and not surprising, interest in supporting morally lofty causes.[50] For that reason, they are much more likely to support a military action proposed by the government if it can be demonstrated that "our" side obviously possesses greater rectitude than the forces we oppose.

While such a consideration sounds awfully obvious, it is not necessarily so in practice. During the cold war days, the United States associated itself with an odd assortment of thugs and sleazy dictators simply because they professed anticommunism. Probably nowhere in the world has this been more the case than in Nicaragua, where our support for the Somoza family brought us enduring hatred and where our creation of a Contra force that was not obviously superior morally or otherwise to the Sandinistas added to our disrepute.

The problem is that in many Third World situations, it is difficult to identify the "angels," those who both should, and will win. This is the case partially because Americans have a tendency to define rectitude through the lens of our own culture and ethnocentrism; if they do not look like us and share our values, "they" are somehow suspect. In most Third World situations, neither side has an obvious lock on virtue, and in fact, neither side may. In the evolving world order, those seeking our help will wear the rhetorical mantle of democracy on their sleeves as easily and blatantly as they once appealed to us on the grounds of anticommunism. We would do well to check the *bona fides* of the pretenders very closely in the future.

- *Does Our Side Have a Reasonable Chance of Winning?*

Because insurgencies are as much (or more) political actions as they are military affairs, this is a question that must be addressed first and foremost in terms of popular support for the insurgents as opposed to the government.

If the brushfire corollary holds, there is reason for concern, because the insurgency is far along and the battle for the hearts and minds of the people may be lost. The question then is whether the government is either willing or able to do the things it needs to do to enhance its popular appeal.

These are two different concerns. Government willingness to engage in the reforms necessary to reduce the political appeal of the insurgents is not a given. In fact, there would probably not be an insurgency if the government were not doing something the people felt was wrong. In all likelihood, those in power—and under siege—have benefited from, and seek to continue, those actions and policies that are at the root of the problem. Typically, at least part of the problem is the need for land reform (El Salvador is the stereotype), which requires redistribution of land from the wealthy to the masses. The very people who would have to give up that land are those in power. In such a case, "the aim of fighting is to defend power and privilege and thus the prescribed good government...may be less palatable than toughing out the insurgency."[51]

Even if the government is willing to engage in reform, there is the remaining question of ability. If the government had the physical ability to straighten out the situation, it would have done so and there would be no problem. The question that must then be asked is whether feasible U.S. assistance (e.g. the level of assistance that can reasonably be expected to be forthcoming) is adequate to allow the government to turn the corner. It is a question that might have been asked more forcefully at the beginning of American involvement in El Salvador, where just enough assistance has been available to avoid the collapse of a series of governments reluctantly and slowly reforming, but not enough to snuff out the basis of insurgency.

- *Do You Realize the Limitations on Your Ability to Influence the Outcome?*

The American spirit of "can do," combined with a righteous belief in the obvious superiority of our cause, tends to make Americans overestimate the appeal they can have, and thus the likelihood their intervention will prove effective. Before contemplating involvement at various levels, it is important to understand two basic limits and to deal with them.

The first is the inverse relationship between the degree of American presence in a Third World conflict and the likelihood of success of "our" side. Insurgencies are, after all, internal affairs, and even though in the past they often have received outside assistance, the outcome is a matter of what internal group prevails. The struggle for power is an internal political competition which can only be waged by the people involved.

Our overt presence will not only not help the side we are supporting, it will likely make matters worse. Third World conflicts occur, after all, largely in former colonial areas where there is a residual suspicion of the former colonizers. When the United States—or any other Northern Hemisphere country—becomes physically involved, the charge of neocolonialism or imperialism will be made by the insurgents, and it will find a responsive note among at least some members of the populace. As example, it has been reported that the Shining Path guerrillas actually want American military intervention in their war against the Peruvian government, because they believe such intervention would solidify popular opinion behind them.[52]

The second limitation is the amount of leverage the United States has over the actions of the side we are supporting. Once again, the relationship may be inverse: the larger the American commitment, the less leverage we have. This is a lesson that should have been learned in the American involvement with President Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam in the late 1950s and early 1960s. We believed we knew what kinds of reforms were necessary in the South to build support for the government and away from the National Liberation Front. Those reforms were anathema to Diem and his supporters, and

he simply ignored them. When we threatened to withhold future aid if he failed to comply, he ignored that too.

The reason was simple: the more the United States invested in Vietnam, the more our sunk cost was, and the harder it was to walk away from such a large investment. Diem figured out that our threats were hollow, because the U.S. Government could not go back to the American people and admit that it had made a tragic mistake that had cost a lot of money and blood. As a result, we experienced what has gently been called the "constraints on leverage"[53] in our relationship. One can certainly raise the question of whether a similar dynamic is not in play in El Salvador. Certainly to the extent this phenomenon occurs, it will be to the frustration of United States policy—and policymakers.

- *Do You Have a Viable Politico/military Strategy?*

Recognizing that the military and political elements of counterinsurgency are closely related, the first part of developing a successful strategy is determining the extent that the government of the country can carry the burden with your help (presumably the government could not prevail without your help or you would not have been called upon). The lower the American profile in a counterinsurgency, the better, as the critical element in these situations, the political support of the population, can only be won by the government. American military involvement, to the extent it is contemplated at all beyond advice, training, and financing, should be limited to providing a shield behind which political action takes place. It is not a bad rule of thumb to assume that the greater the amount of the military burden the United States is asked to shoulder, the less likely is success. This is not a negative statement about United States fighting capabilities, but a question of support for the government.

This leads to another consideration: how do you attack the center of gravity without destroying it? One of the unique characteristics of insurgency/counterinsurgency situations is that both sides have the same center of gravity: the support of the people. The insurgents must appeal to the people and, to the extent they are successful, be part of the general

population. The problem for the government is that it must wrest popular support from the insurgents, which means it must attack, at the same time it is appealing to, the population.

This becomes difficult, requiring the application of the scalpel to remove the cancer without killing the patient or leaving him scarred and bitter. There is a contradiction imbedded here. To woo the population, the government must institute reforms, usually aimed at democratization. Such acts, however, may make it easier for the insurgents to operate, causing the government to engage in acts of repression, which may be militarily necessary but which are generally politically unpopular. The secret is to strike a balance, suppressing the insurgents but not the target population that is the center of gravity. The insurgents also understand this dynamic, and will inevitably try to lure the government into rash actions that cause harm to the population and thus the peoples' perception of the government.

A final element of strategy which has bedeviled U.S. involvements, notably in Vietnam, is how to know if we are winning. Internal wars, as battles over loyalty, do not conform to traditional yardsticks of success, such as territory liberated or the movements of fronts. In guerrilla warfare there are no fronts, and everywhere is the front. The problem is how to depict progress. It is a question of visualization.

This measurement problem is two-faceted. On the one hand, those conducting operations must have a realistic idea of how they are doing in order to plan campaigns and to gauge material and other needs. More importantly, in other than very short, decisive campaigns, one also has to be able to depict progress to the people back home. For public support to remain high, the American population must be convinced that worthwhile action is occurring and that the objective is being attained. As Vietnam clearly demonstrated, the "body count" approach neither proved useful to the military itself in measuring actual progress, nor did it ultimately convince the American public. This was especially true after the Tet offensive, which was supposed to be impossible due to attrition, but which occurred nonetheless.

- *What Will the American People Say About Involvement?*

In the post-cold war world, this may be the most difficult question of them all. When preparing for war in Europe, one could appeal to American vital interests in a free Europe, and in the Third World, one could always justify involvement in Communist/anti-Communist terms during the cold war. Now neither of those appeals are available. What is to replace them?

There are a few simple facts about American preferences—which probably apply to most democracies. First, we are a crusading people who like to frame our military involvements in terms of good and evil, black and white. As already noted, that is often difficult to do in the Third World. Second, the goals we are asked to sacrifice for must be concrete and compelling. During Desert Shield, for instance, the American people would support action to free American hostages from Kuwait and Iraq, but when abstract goals such as world order or less than lofty goals such as access to oil were raised, support became soft. Third, no democracy likes long wars or extensive casualties, and only will accept either for an overwhelmingly good cause.

This question of popular support is likely to become even murkier if the new order evolves as one in which there are not great ideological divisions to justify military action. In such a situation, there will have to be new criteria developed to determine at least in general when and where military involvement can be sold to the public. A related question is what is required to develop assistance programs to beleaguered governments that will elicit sustained public and congressional support.

How any and all of these questions will be answered depends, in some large measure, on how the future pattern of insurgencies and other unrest unfolds in the post-cold war order. Because so much of that pattern was conditioned and—possibly more importantly—funded by the cold war antagonists, it is possible that this activity will become less prevalent. Certainly there will be less sponsors.

At the same time, it is unlikely that the problem will evaporate altogether, for at least three reasons. First, the problems that serve as the nurturing grounds for insurgency—political, economic, and social unrest and instability—will not disappear. Thus, there will be a seedbed for insurgency. Second, not all the insurgencies in the world have needed outside sponsorship. Mao, of course, maintained that an insurgency should be able to subsist without outside aid, and movements such as the New People's Army in the Philippines and *Sendero Luminoso* even before its alliance with the drug traffickers[54] have been quite successful without external support, although monetary limits can place constraints on the level and kind of violence.[55]

The Shining Path example raises a potential third reason not to discount the future of insurgency. The alliance between the Colombian drug traffickers and *Sendero,* in which the traffickers bankroll the insurgents in return for protection from drug agents, suggests the possibility that insurgents in the future may turn to criminal activities to finance their movements. Certainly there is precedent in the sense that terrorist groups have long resorted to bank robberies and other forms of common criminality to underwrite their activities, leading one author to suggest that the drug trade may supplant the cold war as the principal provider of resources for revolutionary and terrorist violence.[56]

Regional Conflicts. The other major form of disturbance in the post-cold war Third World comes from so-called regional conflicts involving middle-sized and larger regional actors pitted against one another or in opposition to the major powers.

The playing field on which regional conflicts occur has elements that are both very familiar and quite new. In the summer of 1990, the 40-plus year-old conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir flared briefly and appeared headed toward yet another war over that tragic land. Only sober heads and, according to at least one source, a recognition of the enormous costs involved for both sides[57] helped cool that crisis. In the months since August 1990, the term regional conflict and Iraq-Kuwait have become virtually synonymous.

The end of the cold war affects regional conflict perversely. In the cold war period, superpower competition both promoted and restrained such conflict. The cold war was promotional in that the presence of one side would almost invariably provoke counteractivity on the other side of regional conflicts to ensure that the opposing superpower did not gain inordinate regional interest. It was restraining in that, to the extent clients could be controlled, it was in the superpower interest to ensure that regional conflicts did not become so intense that the superpowers themselves might be drawn in on opposing sides to a conflict in which their objective interests were less than vital.

The promotion and restraint are gone or disappearing (except for places such as Afghanistan and Angola) but a residue remains. The most obvious residue is the huge stockpile of weapons provided as bait in the cold war, except the restraint on the use of these weapons has dissipated. One observer has even gone so far as to suggest that the unravelling of the cold war and its consequent demilitarization of East and West may provide a glut of surplus arms that will find their way into the Third World,[58] potentially making matters worse.

The receding cold war also strips away restraints, with the possible outcome of making Third World actors more active players and protagonists, "rather than simply locales in which the contest for external influence takes place."[59] The process could be similar to worst-case scenarios for Eastern and Central Europe and the Soviet Union, where the absence of Soviet suppression may lead to the bubbling forth of deeply held ethnic and national animosities. Unattenuated conflicts between numerous Third World countries have some of this same potential, leading one recent observer to speculate that managing regional conflicts will be harder in the future[60] and may require active superpower collaboration, to the extent the Soviet internal condition will allow their active participation in the Third World in the foreseeable future (the role may be limited to that in the Iraq case, sanctioning and promoting U.N. actions).

In addition to this problem of unfettered "emerging powers or regional hegemons,"[61] two other aspects of regional conflict have been mentioned prominently recently and will likely continue to dominate short- and medium-term discussions. The first is the impact of Third World regional powers and their actions on the emerging post-cold war international system (what President Bush refers to as the "new world order.") The second is the problem of proliferation of advanced weapons systems to the Third World, in the short run concentrated on chemical and possibly ABO (agents of biological origin) and ballistic missile possession and production. In the longer run, the proliferation problem extends to the possession by Third World countries of nuclear weapons and longer range, possibly intercontinental, ballistic missiles.

In the contemporary context, the Persian Gulf crisis has brought both of these problems into focus, specifically on Iraq and its leader Saddam Hussein. The invasion and occupation of Kuwait that sparked the international coalition spearheaded by Desert Shield has widely been argued as a precedent for regional powers in the future. In addition, the possession of ballistic missiles, chemical weapons, and the potential for nuclear explosives rivets international attention to the Iraqi situation.

As a world order concern, the principal questions one must ask are how typical of future regional actions was the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and thus how much of a precedent the action of the international community represents. As the public policy debate about appropriate American response to the occupation of Kuwait suggested, there is some disagreement on the issue.

From a world order vantage point, there are two basic positions on the precedent established by various courses of action. President Bush has taken the strong position that the way the system treats the Iraqis will send a powerful message about acceptable behavior in the new international order. It is arguable, for instance, that Saddam Hussein felt he could invade Kuwait without any serious international opposition because of confusion about what constituted acceptable geopolitical behavior during the transition from the cold war

system to the international security system that will replace it. In this view, Saddam would probably have been restrained by the Soviets during the cold war, because of their fear of escalation. When the new rules are in place, they are likely to contain a collective security arrangement featuring U.S.-Soviet cooperation that would deter the Saddams of the world. In the transition as it existed in August 1990, the rules were not clear and Saddam tried to take advantage of the ambiguity.[62]

If this interpretation is correct, then the response to the post-cold war world's first regional conflict will indeed be precedent-setting. If the coalition in the desert succeeds in its collective security-like action, a clear message will be sent and the broad parameters for future actions will be established. Should the coalition fail, a quite different message may be sent.

How important the message is depends on whether the situation is unique, and a number of observers believe it is. Speaking directly to the question of precedent, one observer argues that "it is doubtful that the Persian Gulf crisis, almost no matter what its outcome, will prove the archetype for international responses to regional conflict in the 1990s."[63] In support of his contention he cites the unique nature of the balance of power in the Gulf region, the importance of oil and the uniqueness of Saddam Hussein. Robert Tucker concurs, concluding that the international system "is not rife with potential Saddam Husseins, situated in comparable strategic regions, possessed of the same resources and armed to the teeth."[64]

The other piece of the regional conflict agenda is the proliferation of technologies formerly the exclusive province of the major powers to the Third World. On the current agenda, two problems stand out: the spread of chemical (and possibly biological) weapons to Third World states, and the possession and production of ballistic missiles by regional actors.

The chemical weapons issue, of course, has an Iraqi connection, since Iraq used chemical agents against Iran in 1988 and also against its own Kurdish minority.[65] There is disagreement about just how much effect the use of chemical agents had on the outcome of the Iran-Iraq War: one analyst,

for instance, has recently argued that their use was not decisive, but helped speed a "deterioration in morale"[66] in Iran that predated their employment. No one, however, disputes that they were tactically useful against unprotected Iranian troops, nor that the need to use protective clothing (especially in the desert) degrades the mobility and effectiveness of forces employing the gear.

There is also agreement that the problem of what is commonly called the "poor man's nuclear weapons" is not going to disappear. Although the United States and the Soviet Union are in accord about reducing or eliminating these agents, there are many other countries, including some in the Third World, who are capable of manufacturing chemical weapons. A survey in *Scientific American*, for instance, listed the following chemical-capable producers: Iran, Iraq, Syria, China, North and South Korea, Taiwan and "possibly" Israel.[67] Clearly, a nation with the funds in hand is going to be able to buy chemical weapons from one of those countries, in spite of any contrary superpower action.

If chemical weapons possession is going to be a part of the future landscape in regional conflicts, the question is how the use of these weapons can be limited or hopefully avoided. In World War II, possession by both sides deterred the use of the agents out of fear of reciprocity. At the same time, the postwar world structures of stable deterrence have avoided the use of nuclear weapons. Can either or both of these analogies be applied to chemical weapons balances?

The short answer is that we do not know, because we have spent little time on the problem. Since armed forces can be effectively protected against chemical effects, the utility of those weapons is fairly limited if both sides have them. In that case, the threat to use chemical weapons may be more effective against civilian populations in a manner similar to the logic of nuclear assured destruction.

The threat—if not the actuality—of attacking "countervalue targets" (to borrow from the nuclear lexicon) may have deterrent value, especially in the Middle East. On the one hand, it is difficult to protect cities from chemical effects. Israel, for

instance, has provided gas masks to its citizens, but guaranteeing their timely use, adequate warning, and the like is not very promising. It is a problem not dissimilar to that of civil defense against nuclear war. Similarly, because Middle Eastern populations are generally concentrated in relatively few urban areas[68], it may be easier to hold those populations "hostage" than elsewhere.

The impact of these weapons is not universally agreed upon. While it may be that poor man's "nukes" will create deterrent situations similar to those created by nuclear weapons[69], just the opposite is possible. A world of chemical-capable Third World states, "small states with large grievances...can destabilize the post-cold war settlement."[70]

The other variable in the equation is the proliferation of ballistic missiles to the Third World. Originally, missiles were introduced as part of the cold war competition. While that practice has abated (but not disappeared entirely), the more contemporary concern has centered around the ability and potential of other Third World countries to produce missiles for export. Among the actual or potential producers are Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Israel, and Pakistan.[71] One author goes so far as to predict that in a few years technology will allow numerous states to produce drone aircraft capable of carrying weapons, what he calls a "poor man's cruise missile."[72]

Once again, the problem is new enough that we do not have a good handle on it. Estimates of the number of Third World states now possessing some form of ballistic missiles congregate around twenty[73], and include most prominent Third World regional actors. In several cases, the countries (e.g. India, Pakistan) are either nuclear or near-nuclear, adding yet another dangerous aspect to a problem that will increasingly occupy planners in the future.

CHAPTER 4

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ARMY

The end of the cold war has changed markedly the environment in which the United States may be called upon to employ force in the future. The experience of Desert Storm has provided something of a respite in confronting that change, because many of the old ways of doing things seem to apply in that situation. When Desert Storm is a memory, however, the traumatic truths issuing from the revolutions of 1989 will still be there. The United States Army will be one of the institutions most traumatized by the collision with new realities unless it shows the foresight necessary for the transition.

There will be at least four features of the new international order of direct relevance to the Army. First, East-West confrontation, and most of the wherewithal necessary to conduct that confrontation will become decreasingly relevant and increasingly difficult to justify to the public (especially in an environment of continuing economic austerity). The nuclear balance will likely remain at a high level of armament and thus necessitate continued commitment which will be noncontroversial. Maintaining a large, "heavy" conventional force in an era of "the diminution of the likelihood of large-scale conflicts between states"[74] will be more difficult. A parallel phenomenon will almost certainly be a higher level of security cooperation between the former cold war combatants.

Second, security emphasis is likely to shift from East-West to North-South. This is true partially for tautological reasons: there is more instability in the Third World than elsewhere, and thus more potential for U.S. involvement. At the same time, however, there will be a very loud internal debate within the United States about the propriety of American involvement in Third World situations. Partly the question of what vital U.S.

interests are at risk will be raised, as well as the Vietnam experience. Depending on how it turns out in the end, the Iraq-Kuwait adventure will also affect the debate and whether it is "a harbinger of renewed order and control...[or] yet another piece of evidence that power in the international system is disintegrating."[75] The emphasis will, in other words, be part of a new chapter in the ongoing debate over international activism or passivity. The outcome is not clear.

Third, the new pattern of conflict is going to be more complex, ambiguous, and frustrating than the past. The problems of the cold war were, after all, conceptually straightforward. There was a definable enemy with known capabilities and potential goals who was likely to act in predictable ways. It was an environment that was familiar and, if operationally challenging, conceptually comfortable.

Third World conflicts are not like that. Many of them are internal struggles for political control that are, by their nature, if not their weaponry, total wars. They are often fought unconventionally in ways that frustrate conventional forces. Moreover, the outcomes are usually not as neat, tidy, and satisfying as conventional wars. For some idea of the frustrations that often accompany such situations, consider the following list of "lessons" of Vietnam and Afghanistan recently compiled by a leading analyst:

> the shifting and unsound basis for military alliance; the transience of any gains, political or military; the exemplary ingratitude of clients; the grossly unfavorable cost-gain ratio of intervention; the bottomless pit of economic aid; and finally the rise of self-sufficient and powerful regional hegemonic powers, suspicious and resentful of extra-regional penetration.[76]

While the author may be vulnerable to charges of hyperbole, it is nonetheless a list that gives some pause; at a minimum, it suggests that Third World actions in the future, as has often been the case in the past, will not necessarily be unambiguously popular nor easy to sustain.

Fourth, it is not entirely clear that in many of these cases military force, and especially American force, can provide more than "a partial solution"[77] to Third World instabilities. As

suggested earlier, many of the problems are economic, social, and political in nature, and the solutions are tangentially military at best. It may well be that the American—and Soviet—role in the future in Third World situations will be "bringing to an end those crises"[78] that occur, probably in implicit or explicit concert.

Dealing with this changed environment requires change both on the part of the overall national security decisionmaking process, and specifically the Army. From the vantage point of the overall system, there needs to be a broadening of the way Third World problems are addressed and decisions made.

Part of this will be a matter of unlearning old ways. One analyst, for instance, argues there are three obstacles that remain from the 1980s: disagreement and confusion among senior officials about low-intensity Third World situations; an inability to develop a coherent political-military doctrine; and institutional opposition to proper interagency coordination.[79]

The latter of these problems is the key. If the system has had difficulty in the past agreeing on how to deal with Third World problems, it is at least partially because these situations go beyond the institutional expertise of any single part of government. Third World problems are neither sheerly politicial nor economic nor social nor military; they are partially all of these. As a result, the solutions to these problems, and some consensus on how the U.S. Government can affect these difficulties in ways consonant with our interests, must incorporate all relevant perspectives.

The solution currently being developed within the Government is the formation of a "permanent inter-departmental group,...a small interagency coordinating body."[80] The purpose of this body, bringing together the relevant area and functional expertise of the government on an ad hoc basis, would be to look at specific crises and problems and to recommend solutions. The most likely locus of such a body would be within the National Security Council staff structure, in order to avoid the parochialism that might accompany its placement within an established Cabinet-level department.

If the Army is to make a positive contribution to this process, there are two things it must do. First, individual leaders and the institution must adopt a mindset compatible with the new realities. As part of the "new paradigm" for the Army, consider the requisites for the future as described by a career Army officer:

> As a precondition of political and moral acceptability, armies will employ force only in discrete amounts and for specific, achievable purposes, with commanders held accountable for needless collateral damage; force will constitute only one venue among many that states will employ to achieve their aims, with military means integrated with and even subordinate to these other means.[81]

In the new era of limited war, the warrior-scholar who understands situations in their broader contexts will be of the greatest value to his country.

This suggests the second major imperative for the Army. If the institution is to provide the best possible counsel to national leaders and to make the appropriate *military* advice, it must *maximize its own institutional expertise in the new theaters of* operation.

There are two specific programs within the Army that should be emphasized. The first is the foreign area officer (FAO) program. Third World conflicts occur in physical regions and within the contexts of cultural differences that may make military advice quite applicable in one context and totally counterproductive in another. The Army does not, at this point, suffer from a surplus of experts on foreign cultures, languages, politics, and history, nor does the professional officer receive more than the scantiest exposure to Third World concerns prior to the senior war college experience, where that exposure is less than exhaustive.

Lack of foreign area expertise may have been acceptable in preparing to fight in Europe, where the geography and cultures were similar to our own and where the political and other consequences of various forms of military action were either unimportant or predictable. Our experience from Southeast Asia to Afghanistan to the Persian Gulf should have

taught us by now the shortcomings of applying Western solutions to non-Western problems.

In the interagency process that comes to govern future Third World involvements, the Army, either directly or indirectly through the Defense Department, is going to be asked its advice on the feasibility and advisability of using American forces, including Army troops, in the Third World. The Army has a small cadre of FAOs to help provide that kind of advice, but there will be a greater need for more people with FAO credentials in the future; the alternative is to offer decreasingly relevant advice which will, in the long, if not the short run, be ignored.

The second area of focus has to be on special forces. If one considers the Desert Storm experience to be *sui generis* or close to it (in what other place in the world can one imagine a similar set of vital interests and like military problems and requirements?), then there will be very little need for large, heavy force involvement. The involvements one can more easily envisage will be short, decisive interventions such as Just Cause in Panama. There much of the purpose of the exercise was political, including the capture of Manuel Noriega—a special forces-style mission. At the same time, where there are occasions for involvement in internal matters, it is likely that much of our response will be either in the form of providing advisors and trainers, or in engaging in politico-military actions. Both are the province of special forces.

There is really no alternative to these kinds of adjustments. The action for the foreseeable future is going to be in the Third World. The kinds of potential involvements are uncomfortable because they are either unfamiliar or painful due to their similarity to past experiences with less than fortunate outcomes. So be it. The new world out there is one in which Third World conflict will be the problem that requires solution.

ENDNOTES

1. The classic statement of this position is Claude Inis, Jr., *Swords into Plowshares: The Problems and Progress of International Organization,* New York: Random House, 1971.

2. Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?", *The National Interest,* No. 16, Summer 1989, pp. 3-18.

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